

RECOGNIZING SPRINGFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT K9 THOR

(Ms. BUDZINSKI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. BUDZINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the service of a beloved member of the Springfield Police Department who recently passed, K9 Thor.

Thor worked second watch for 8 years as a dual-purpose police K9 until his retirement in 2019. Trained in apprehending criminals and searching for evidence and narcotics, he played an important role in keeping our community safe.

During his career, Thor won numerous awards at the United States Police Canine Association region 16 trials, including four perfect scores in suspect search and evidence search, distinctions that my little, 20-pound Lulu just might not have cut it.

When Thor wasn't fighting crime, his favorite activity was chasing tennis balls at home and spending time with his family.

As we reflect on Thor's service to the Springfield community, we are reminded of the sacrifices that our law enforcement officers and their K9 partners make every day to keep us safe.

Thank you, Thor, and thank you to all of the first responders in the Illinois 13th Congressional District for your dedication to service.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF JARED LLOYD

(Mr. LAWLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAWLER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize a fallen hero from Rockland County.

Two years ago yesterday, Jared Lloyd went to the Columbian Engine Company No. 1 firehouse, like he had hundreds of times before, to help keep our community safe.

He did not know that it would be his last call when he and his company were called to the Evergreen Court Adult Home in Spring Valley to combat a fire that started, putting the lives of hundreds of elderly residents at risk.

He, along with hundreds of other first responders, descended on the scene, running headlong into the building that was becoming engulfed with flames. Together, they saved over 100 lives that day, a heroic feat.

Tragically, Jared lost his life in this effort, which serves as a stark reminder of the incredible bravery shown by all of our first responders in the Hudson Valley and across our Nation, but especially our volunteer firefighters.

Thank you, Jared. Thank you for your service, your sacrifice, and your example. I know all of Rockland mourns you today and every day, and

we will always be there to support your family, including your two incredible sons.

EDUCATION IS THE LIFELINE FOR THE FUTURE

(Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, recently I traveled to six counties in my district and looked at different aspects of education, ranging from Title I funds, STEM, school nutrition, and physical education, to providing safe learning environments.

Mr. Speaker, after speaking with many students, I learned that they are seeking new opportunities to live their dreams, and they tend to respond best to caring adults such as parents, guardians, teachers, coaches, custodians, and even bus drivers.

During my visits, I also was honored to serve as a teacher assistant at Central Elementary in Northampton County.

Ms. Leanna Cahoon, also known by her students as Ms. C, stayed busy as ever, grading tests, helping students with math and spelling, and assisting classrooms when needed. We must applaud not only Ms. C, but all teacher assistants and educators.

Mr. Speaker, education is a lifeline for the future, and we must provide the resources for our students to succeed because, after all, our young minds will be the ones who will transform not only eastern North Carolina but America forever.

AFFORDABLE SCHOOL LUNCHES

(Mr. ALFORD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ALFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the importance of ensuring that all students are fed in a nutritious and affordable manner. I am proud to have introduced H.R. 1168, the School Lunch Affordability Act Of 2023.

Every year, schools are forced to raise their school lunch prices to comply with the Paid Lunch Equity program set by the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act. This arbitrary price increase mandated miles away by Congress has no impact on nutritional content and puts unnecessary pressure on hardworking American families and, ultimately, leads to more hungry students.

This legislation would amend the regulation to return local control to schools. Protecting the health and nutrition of our youth is a critical, critical aspect of a strong educational system and it is completely un-American to subject our local schools to the burdensome Federal regulations.

Schools should be able to make these decisions for themselves, not the bureaucrats in Washington. This legisla-

tion grants them this ability at the local level.

CULTURE WARS IN OUR CLASSROOMS

(Mr. NICKEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 5, a partisan effort to bring culture wars into our Nation's classrooms.

My grandfather had a way of saying no to me as a kid. He would hold up his hand and he would say, when red hair grows right here in the palm of his hand. That was his way of saying no. It is the same with this legislation in the Senate which will go nowhere in the Senate.

It opens the door to more book bans in our local school libraries by requiring schools to report each and every book in their inventory.

Let's be clear: Recent attempts to restrict access to books are an attack on the fundamental values of our democracy. Banning books is not only a violation of our First Amendment rights, but it also undermines our children's education and intellectual growth.

As a father of two, I am disappointed by these partisan attempts to restrict access to books that could inspire and educate our children. We should be working together to build a better future for our kids, instead of engaging in more partisan political games.

TRENDS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

(Mr. GROTHMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call attention to a disturbing trend that is going on in our colleges and universities.

We all know—or at least anybody on this side of the aisle—from talking to college students, they feel there are certain things they just can't say. It is going to cost them a grade. When you are dealing with young professors, it is going to cost them tenure, and that is the intolerance for conservative ideas or religious ideas in America's universities.

Lately, we have had universities say they are not going to deal with standardized tests anymore, the SAT, that sort of thing. It is another way—and people have to remember this. It is fun not to take a test, but it is another way to go after people who are at all conservative.

Right now, you can be as religious as you want, you can be as Republican as you want, you can have a lifestyle that includes, for example, hunting, and if you get a good SAT score, they have got to let you in even though they don't want to, or they will let you in even though they don't want to.

As we get rid of SAT scores, it opens things more to subjective determinations, and the liberals who run our universities are going to use those subjective determinations to keep our conservatives out of the important universities in this country.

HONORING THE LIFE OF EVA ALVAREZ

(Ms. SCHOLTEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SCHOLTEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of a west Michigan leader, advocate, former colleague, and friend. Taken from us too soon, she will go down in history as a trail-blazing young woman.

Eva Alvarez was the daughter of migrant farmworkers, one of seven children who worked her way through college and her master's degree. She was the Public Policy Coordinator for the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center.

I had the joy of working with Eva to help support hardworking migrant farmworkers throughout Michigan, and together we partnered to shine a light on injustice, uplift those often pushed aside in society, and make our community a little more just, fair, and humane.

In addition to her work on policy, she co-founded Empowering Latina Leaders and Advocates for Success, ELLAS, the first professional network in Southwest Michigan for Latina women. In all she did, Eva was bringing others up around her. She often reminded us "we did not get here alone, help pave the way for others."

With a smile that could light up a room, an infectious laugh, and a quick-witted sense of humor, Eva pressed on through difficult work. She carried a vision of communities and systems that treat every individual with dignity and respect, regardless of who they were, where they came from, their skin color, or the language that they spoke.

Every day, she worked to bring Michigan a little bit closer to that vision, practicing welcome everywhere she went. Her work will leave a legacy of justice and compassion; her friendship memories of joy and light. I continue my work to make west Michigan a better place because of her.

RECOGNIZING MIKAELA SHIFFRIN

(Ms. KUSTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. KUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as co-chair of the Bipartisan Ski and Snow Board Caucus to recognize the incredible achievements of New Hampshire's own Mikaela Shiffrin, the most-decorated skier of all time.

On March 11, 2023, during Women's History Month, Mikaela broke the record for the most World Cup alpine

wins by any skier, male or female, earning 87 championship wins and securing her place in history.

Shortly after, she won another title, breaking her own record and making history again. I love having a woman be the most decorated skier in the world.

From her earliest days, when I met her at the Dartmouth Ski Way and first watched her race with her late father, my friend, Jeff, Mikaela has taken the world by storm. Her record-breaking win and dedication to the sport will inspire women and girls across the country and around the world.

Thank you, Mikaela, for inspiring us to be nice, think first, and have fun.

RECOGNIZING THE MOLINE HIGH SCHOOL BOYS BASKETBALL TEAM

(Mr. SORESEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SORESEN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize a very special group from western Illinois, the Moline High School Boys Basketball Team.

The Maroons recently made history, bringing home the school's first-ever State Championship win.

Under Head Coach Sean Taylor, the Maroons demonstrated intense perseverance and skill, securing a 59-42 victory after an impressive 35-win season.

I know this group's hard work and determination are a source of pride for the entire Moline community and for the State of Illinois, and it is my honor to recognize them here on the floor of the House of Representatives today.

This was their first State Championship, and I have no doubt it will not be their last.

Go Maroons.

GUN VIOLENCE IN AMERICA

(Ms. BROWNLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. BROWNLEY. Mr. Speaker, the number one cause of death for children in America is gun violence. Yet, instead of making our schools safer and creating environments for children to thrive, House Republicans are focusing their attention on harmful political rhetoric.

Today's passage of H.R. 5 politicizes classrooms and facilitates the censorship of American stories, American experiences, and factual American history.

To unreasonably limit the scope of our children's knowledge and to dilute their critical thinking abilities is an immense disservice to America's children and to our country's future.

Instead of solving real problems, House Republicans are simply trying to distract the American people with divisive political stunts and empty culture wars.

I urge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to work with House

Democrats to pass legislation that will actually help America's children, not exploit them to further divide Americans for political gain.

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PROTECTING GI BILL BENEFITS FROM FRAUD

(Mrs. RAMIREZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to uplift our student veterans and call attention to a great need.

Many of our veterans go on to use their GI Bill benefits to go to school or to seek training. That is part of our commitment to veterans. Sadly, those GI Bill benefits can be seen as money targets by predatory institutions. If a school commits an act of fraud, there is no across-the-board mechanism in place for student veterans to restore their GI Bill benefits.

We can change that, which is exactly what my bill, H.R. 1767, the Student Veteran Benefit Restoration Act, will do.

I am honored to introduce my first piece of legislation and to do so with the support of my ranking member on the Veterans' Affairs' Economic Opportunity Subcommittee, Congressman MIKE LEVIN.

It has taken many people's dedicated advocacy over many years to get us here, and it is a critical opportunity to better deliver on our commitment to our veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I welcome all of my colleagues to join me.

REPUBLICAN ASSAULT ON PUBLIC EDUCATION

(Mr. PAYNE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to attack the bill H.R. 5 because it attacks education.

Republicans call it the Parents Bill of Rights Act. In reality, it should be called the politics over parents act.

H.R. 5 would take vital resources away from local schools and educators. It would allow schools to be centers of indoctrination and not education. It would allow communities to ban books if they don't like them.

The Founding Fathers knew that public education was vital to an educated populace and proper self-government. It has helped millions of Americans rise out of poverty, and it has helped millions of Americans start businesses and pursue the American Dream. Yet, Republicans continue their assault on public education at every opportunity.

I am proud to be part of a party that supports the American Dream for all Americans and not one that wants to reject it. Thank goodness for the United States Senate.